

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

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FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6749

AMEMBASSY ANKARA IMMEDIATE

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EXDIS

ANKARA PASS SECRETARY

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ENRG, MNUC, IS, US

SUBJECT: PERES AND RABIN ON NUCLEAR POLICY

1. SENATOR HOWARD BAKER, IN DISCUSSION WITH PRIME MINISTER RABIN AND DEFENSE MINISTER PERES MAY 19-20, NOTED THAT AMERICAN PRESS HAD SPECULATED RECENTLY THAT GOI HAD ALREADY BUILT ATOMIC WEAPONS. SENATOR BAKER, AFTER STATING THAT HE WAS MEMBER OF JCAE, AS WELL AS OF SFRC AND HAD SPECIAL INTEREST IN THIS SUBJECT, ASKED RABIN AND PERES FOR THEIR COMMENTS.

2. RABIN TOLD SENATOR BAKER THAT GOI HAD MADE A COMMITMENT TO USG NOT TO BE THE FIRST STATE TO INTRODUCE NUCLEAR WEAPONS INTO THE AREA. ISRAEL HAD KEPT ITS WORD. IF ISRAEL WERE TO INTRODUCE SUCH WEAPONS, RABIN ADDED, RUSSIA WOULD GIVE NUCLEAR WEAPONS TO ARAB STATES. PERES ALSO DESCRIBED GOI POLICY IN ABOVE TERMS, NOTING THAT INTRODUCTION OF ATOMIC WEAPONS BY ISRAEL WOULD CREATE CONFLICT WITH US AND, BY PUSHING SOVIETS TO GIVE SIMILAR WEAPONS TO ARABS, WOULD BRING MIDDLE EAST TO POINT OF NO RETURN.

3. PERES, IN REPLY TO DIRECT QUESTION, STATED THAT ISRAEL HAS NOT CONSTRUCTED A MILITARY NUCLEAR DEVICE. SENATOR BAKER THEN ASKED WHETHER PERES MEANT THAT

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ISRAEL HAD NOT CONSTRUCTED AN EXPLOSIVE DEVICE AND

PERES SAID THAT IS WHAT HE MEANT.

4. RABIN NOTED THAT THERE HAD BEEN US-GOI AGREEMENT REGARDING VISITS TO NUCLEAR FACILITIES. IN 1969, HE SAID, US--"AND RIGHTLY SO"--HAD TERMINATED THESE VISITS. THE DIMONA FACILITY WAS NOT OPEN FOR INSPECTION BUT THE SMALL FACILITY AT NAHAL SHOREK WAS OPEN TO INSPECTION BY IAEA AUTHORITIES.

5. RABIN ALSO STATED THAT GOI HAD NOT SIGNED NPT, BECAUSE IT REGARDED THIS AS PART OF ARMS RACE ISSUE IN AREA AND OF AN EVENTUAL OVERALL POLITICAL SETTLEMENT.

6. SENATOR BAKER ALSO REFERRED TO REPORTS THAT, DURING OCTOBER 1973 WAR, SOVIETS HAD PLACED NUCLEAR DEVICES OFF THE COAST OF ALEXANDRIA. THESE DEVICES REPORTEDLY HAD REMAINED IN HANDS OF SOVIET PERSONNEL. PERES IN REPLY SAID THAT HE DID NOT HAVE ANY HARD INFORMATION ON THIS SUBJECT. AS FAR AS HE KNEW, THERE HAD BEEN SOVIET SHIP IN THAT AREA DURING THE WAR WHICH HAD GIVEN OFF SOME RADIOACTIVE SIGNALS, BUT GOI DID NOT KNOW WHAT EQUIPMENT WAS ABOARD. PERES CONCLUDED BY NOTING THAT WHILE SOVIETS WERE HOSTILE, THEY WERE NOT IRRESPONSIBLE, "I DON'T THINK THE SOVIETS WILL GIVE ATOMIC DEVICES TO THE ARABS."
VELIOTES

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